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## Italy cruise captain to be put under house arrest

ROME (AFP) - The captain of a luxury liner which ran aground off the coast of Italy will be released from prison but put under house arrest, his defence lawyer told journalists yesterday.

Judge Valeria Montesarchio ruled that Costa Concordia captain Francesco Schettino should be placed under house arrest, lawyer Bruno Leporatti said.

Schettino is awaiting trial on accusations of multiple manslaughter and abandoning ship while passengers were still on board.

He was arrested on Saturday after chief prosecutor Francesco Verusio said he was an escape risk.

Verusio told journalists that Schettino risked 15 years

in prison if found guilty.

The captain told interrogators he was at the helm of the ship when disaster struck but did not abandon ship. He said he fell into the sea and could not get back on board the tilting vessel, the Corriere della sera newspaper said.

His lawyer backed the claim, telling journalists: "The ship at that moment was tilted over by 90 degrees."

"You try and get back onto a boat that is at a 90 degrees angle without a helicopter," Leporatti said.

The vast Costa Concordia cruise ship carrying over 3,000 passengers sank after hitting a rock and turning over on its side. At least 11 people have died and dozens are still missing.

## Police Officers of the Year 2011 receive commendations from Minister of Justice

*Special recognition for 3 officers performing above and beyond the call of duty*



**Leonardo Donato**



**Davidson Eduards**



**Lubienshka Dijkhoff**

missioner of Police Adolfo Richardson at police corps headquarters in Macuarima yesterday morning to award commendations to 4 Officers of the Year 2011 for consistent dedication to service, and 3 in particular who saved the life of one of their fellow officers by their cool heads and quick action.

Police officers from the 4 precincts, Oranjestad, Santa Cruz, Noord and San Nicolas were honored for outstanding performance of their duties. They were Officer Eduardo Brema from Oranjestad, Of-

ficer Leonardo Donato from Noord, Officer Davidson Eduards from San Nicolas and Officer Lubienshka Dijkhoff from Santa Cruz Precinct.

Also cited that morning for exceptional performance were Officers Richard van den Berg, Edgar Maduro and Roene Holewijn. Their fast thinking saved the life of a fellow officer who had a heart attack in the middle of the night while on duty on December 28, 2011.

*Continued on page 3*



**Eduardo Brema**

Aruba's Minister of Justice and Education, Arthur Dowers, joined the Chief Com-

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## Quota Club supports KPA Victims Response Team



Quota Club Volunteers with Trudy Hassell and Adofo Richardson



Minister Dowers with Quota President Maria Gonzales

Quota Club President Maria Gonzales was joined by volun-

port and recognition for the important work of this special-

ized team with the police corps. The Victim Response Team moved recently to police jurisdiction, being formally a part of the Ministry of Social Affairs. They provide counseling and legal assistance for victims of crimes, and in particular incidents of domestic and child abuse.

The unit has regular office hours daily from 7:30 AM to Noon and 1:00 to 4:30 PM in the afternoon and are located within Police Headquarters at Macuarima 65. Personnel are comprised of police officers, psychologists and social workers specialized in the laws regulations victim assistance and

compensation.

The team can be contacted at telephone 583-6405 or 588-1339 and will respond to and emergency call to their hot-line 592-3231, at any hour. Quota Club reiterated their support of the important work of this department, particularly in their role in assisting victims of domestic violence.

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by Rosalie Klein



Project Manager Ivy Simon with Officer Dijkhoff

## Aruba rejoices over 4.9% tourism increase in December 2011!

ORANJESTAD -- The last month of the year behind us, December 2011 marked an exceptionally positive year for Aruba's tourism. There was a whopping increase of 4.9% in the amount of visitors to the island.

The number of visitors for December 2011 was 81.455 compared to 77.662 in December 2010.

The government is convinced that this was achieved through a combination of efforts. For one, there was a concerted effort to work closely with our partners, and secondly to ensure that the quality of the Aruba product is of the highest quality and finally through a planned diversification of the tourism markets.

The North American market saw an increase of 2.3% in visitor arrivals. North America includes the USA and Canada. The US market alone saw an increase of 1.8% with every region showing an increase. The Northeast grew by 0.3%, the Western region with 6.8%, the Mid-Atlantic region with 0.7%, the Mid-West with 1%

and the Southeast with 5.7%.

As to Canada, we saw a considerable increase, reaching an impressive 6.4% increase in visitors from Canada.

Likewise, the South American market registered a remarkable increase of 12.3% in visitors from this region. In 2010 we received 20.923 visitors from South America, while in 2011 this amount was increased to 23.505 visitors.

The only Latin-American market which registered a decrease in the month of December was Brazil. This decrease was 2.3%. Venezuela on the other hand recovered greatly showing a whopping increase of 13.1% of Venezuelan visitors visiting the island in the month of December.

Colombia also performed tremendously with a growth of 2.4%, and Argentina increased their visitor arrivals to Aruba by 91.5%.

With respect to the European market, even though December closed out with a slight drop in arrivals from Europe... 0.9%, the overall 2011 performance was positive. They

closed out the year with an increase of 7.2% overall.

There was a drop in arrivals from Holland in December. Scandinavia, Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom all registered increases, respectively 4%, 13.87%, 20.9% and 11.2%.

Aruba envisions great challenges in 2012 for our tourism. However, if we band together, work hard together with all partners contributing, we would be more than able and prepared to face the challenges and to continue this trend of successful tourism development and growth!

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## Police Officers of the Year 2011...

Continued from page 1



Minister Dowers, Dolfi Richardson, Trudy Hassell with officers of the year

The doctors attending the stricken officer reports his colleagues' adept application of CPR and emergency response saved his life, and reported their exceptional action to police officials. "It is good to know you are there to support your fellow police officers with the proper knowledge and application of life-saving techniques," Police Commissioner Richardson told the two officers attending when presenting their commendations along with Deputy Police Commissioner Trudy Hassell.

by Rosalie Klein



Van den Berg and Maduro honored for action above and beyond

## Almost 600.000 cruise visitors to Aruba in 2011!

ORANJESTAD -- The positive 2011 tourism results for Aruba was both in tourism stay over visitors and in cruise tourism. The cruise tourism goal for 2011 was set at a 5% growth rate, but the growth rate reached 5.4%...slightly more than was expected! This amount represents a whopping 599.973 cruise visitors compared to 569.242 cruise visitors of 2010.

Obviously, Aruba invested much time, money and effort into the marketing of the island to the cruise industry.

The cruise industry is an important segment in our general tourism. Cruise visitors contribute economically, and more importantly every cruise visitor is a potential stay over visitor. For this reason Aruba has placed a great deal of emphasis on the total quality of the Aruba product!

Throughout 2011 we saw an increase in our cruise visitors. The month of December was especially remarkable with 103.268 cruise visitors descending on our wharf. The

number of cruise visitors for December 2010 was 82.775 cruise visitors....a whopping increase of 24.8%!

There was also a sizeable increase in the number of crew members on the island in December...39.850, which was an increase of 16% compared to December 2010.

With respect to the number of cruise calls, there were 49 calls in December 2011 and 47 calls in December 2010. As for the number of calls for the entire year, there was an increase of 19 calls, which means 314 in 2010 and 333 calls in 2011!

The government expects 2012 to be exceptionally positive and expects to surpass 600.000 cruise visitors. Royal Caribbean International has already announced that Aruba will be on their itinerary with their luxury liner, Vision of the Seas. Aruba can expect 5 calls representing 10 thousand cruise visitors! All indications are that we can expect a fantastic tourism year!





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## Rococo Plaza Antiques celebrating silver anniversary



The day has already passed when 25 years ago the first Antique shop on Aruba was established in the unique Rococo Plaza in Tanki Leendert; parts of which are constructed with building materials from the 17th century. The Austrian red copper onion towers are most striking and come from an authentic landmark.

When the shop was new, and being a concept unheard of on Aruba, the question was frequently asked if there was an entrance fee required to enter. This spurred the idea to form a flea market in the inner-court to make it more comfortable and to attract customers from all walks of life.

The flea market proved very popular, increasing in size and now stretched out to occupy the parking lot the first Sunday of every month. Temporary suspended due to Carnival activities, it will start again on the March 4.

Until then, this small Antique shop has grown to one of

the largest in the Caribbean and occupies several rooms

and two levels of Rococo Plaza. Just browsing this huge collection of tasteful arrangements is an adventure, because there is so much to see.

From rich hand carved wooden furniture, to fine porcelain, paintings, oriental rugs, bronzes and wooden statues comprising various collections and diverse eras, overwhelming; it takes time to absorb everything.

Louis XV Antiques & Curiosities celebrates their 25th anniversary till end of the month, with a 25% discount. The shop is open daily from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. and from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m.

To get an entertaining impression of the inventory, feel free to visit their website: [www.antiquesaruba.com](http://www.antiquesaruba.com)

## A heartfelt 'Thank You' to Caribmedia from the Clown Doctors of Aruba



twelve years ago a new foundation saw the light: the Clown Doctors of Aruba. This foundation has as its goal to bring a ray of sunshine in the lives of those who have not much to smile about. Children in the hospital, mentally challenged children and the elderly receive regular visits from clowns to brighten up their lives.

Donations help pay for the clowns' salaries or there is support in other ways. And that is where Caribmedia comes in. Almost since its beginning, Daphne Lejuez' firm has supported the foundation by designing its website as well as hosting it.

High time for president Peter Balliere to say a heartfelt, huge 'thank you' to Daphne and her excellent Caribmedia team, who recently launched the renewed Clown Doctors



website. The Clown Doctors of Aruba greatly appreciate the many years of continued support. Masha danki!

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## Motorcycle Corp announced Police Team of the Year

While announcing the Officers of the Year at Police Headquarters in Macaurima yesterday morning, Chief Commissioner of Police Adolfo Richardson and Deputy Commissioner Trudy Hassel singled out the 15 members of Aruba's Motorcycle Corp for the honor of Police Team of the Year 2011.

"If any group has embodied the principles all police personnel aspire to, over the past year we all agree, it has been Aruba's Motorcycle Corp," stated Officer Hassel when presenting the Team Leader Robert Kock with a trophy on behalf of all the motorcycle cops. "They are first on the scene during incidents and organize bystanders in a polite and professional manner; they work till all hours of the night and have demonstrated true teamwork and esprit de corps."

Motor Unit Police receiving citations for their outstanding performance are Officers Kock, Pieters, Reuters, Pietersz, Luidens, Meye, Wever, Geerman, Boekhoudt, Gomez, Croes, Tromp, Croes, Visser and Wing.

Following the informal awards ceremony, all those being honored enjoyed a congenial celebration for their dedication to duty. Unfortunately, not all could be present, as a portion of the team was attending to their duty on Aruba's streets.



Team leader Robert Kock accepts for the Motor Unit



by Rosalie Klein

Group of the Year Motor Unit



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## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### Hundreds take part in 'Occupy Congress' protest

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Lawmakers returning from a three-week winter break were greeted yesterday by hundreds of protesters from the "Occupy" movement, who gathered outside the US Capitol building to decry the corrupting influence of money in politics.

The protesters with the so-called Occupy Congress group -- met by scores of uniformed police officers -- were denied entry to congressional corridors, and said they planned to spend the entire day on the

grassy areas the surround the building.

As they chanted and brandished placards amid a steady winter drizzle, the protesters wielded signs urging lawmakers to "Come out of your ivory tower and hear the people."

Another told lawmakers that "We are here to be heard."

The demonstration included some protesters who had come to Washington from out of town, and others who already have been protesting for weeks at one of two downtown Washington sites inhabited by "Oc-

cupy Washington" and "Occupy DC" demonstrators.

Washington's Mayor Vincent Gray last week asked the National Park Service to evict protesters to eliminate rats and trash and allow restoration of the park at one site, in the MacPherson Square area near the White House.

The Occupy movement took its cue from mass protests against budget cuts and unemployment in Europe and says it is also inspired by democracy revolutions in North Africa.

### Captain of doomed Italian liner a 'high-spirited dare devil'

ROME (AFP) - The captain of the cruise liner which ran aground off Italy's coast has been branded a reckless show-off who refused to listen to orders and operated the ship as if it was a speed boat.

Mario Palombo, a former captain of the doomed Costa Concordia with whom Schettino served as first mate for four years, told investigators that he was "too high-spirited and a dare devil," local media reported.

"It was bravado, Schettino was showing off, clowning around, it was incredibly stupid. I would sentence him not once but 10 times," said another former captain who worked with the ship's owner Costa Crociere. "The rock was clearly signed on all the shipping maps," he told AFP.

One of the officers on the Concordia, Martino Pellegrino, told investigators that Schettino, from the Amalfi coast region near Naples, ruled with "an inflexible authority... against which no-one could make their voices heard."

Schettino, who had worked

on cruise ships since 2002 and was promoted to captain in 2006, was described by one investigator as someone "who would drive a luxury bus on the motorway like it was a Ferrari".

Europe's largest cruise operator, which owns the Costa Concordia, accused the captain of an "inexplicable" error and disassociated themselves from him.

Schettino denied abandoning ship and said he had saved hundreds if not thousands of lives, according to his lawyer Bruno Leporatti. The captain "carried out a brilliant manoeuvre" after the collision, and had "kept his wits about him", managing to steer the vessel towards the shore and "save a number of lives."

But according to investigators, the flooded engine rooms would have made it impossible for him to navigate the ship, which drifted close to the tiny port on Giglio Island before lurching over to one side.

Witness testimony and the recordings of conversations between the captain and offi-

cials at Livorno, the biggest port in the region, have revealed his uncooperative attitude following the collision.

Having told passengers the liner had suffered an electrical fault, Schettino hesitated over abandoning ship and then left before the last passengers had been evacuated -- and refused to go back on board to supervise the rescue.

"You must tell us how many people, children, women and passengers are there and the exact number of each category," the official tells Schettino, according to the transcript of the conversation.

"What are you doing? Are you abandoning the rescue?" the official says.

Insults flooded Italian social networks, with the Corriere della Sera reporting that angry comments on Twitter blasted Italy's "most hated man."

"He is a yellow-bellied coward who ran away with his tail between his legs, and thought only of saving his own life rather than the passengers," said one.

### US bans import of Burmese pythons



In this photo provided by the Everglades National Park, the carcass of a six-foot alligator is shown protruding from the mid-section of a 13-foot Burmese python.

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States announced yesterday it is banning the import of Burmese pythons and three other species of giant constrictor snakes due to the danger they pose to local wildlife.

The formal ban on importing or transporting across state lines the Burmese python, the yellow anaconda and the northern and southern African pythons will take effect in about two months, said the Fish and Wildlife Service.

According to the decision, the four big snakes are considered "injurious wildlife" and the ban aims to halt their spread in the wild. People who own them as pets would not likely be affected by the new restrictions.

"Burmese pythons have already caused substantial harm in Florida," said FWS director Dan Ashe, noting that they

have preyed on endangered Key Largo wood rats while other pythons have eaten endangered wood storks.

"By taking this action today, we will help prevent further harm from these large constrictor snakes to native wildlife, especially in habitats that can support constrictor snake populations across the southern United States and in US territories."

US authorities have spent millions of dollars in the Florida Everglades due to the threat posed by the big snakes, "an amount far less than is needed to combat their spread," the FWS added.

Five other non-native snakes remain under consideration for listing as "injurious," including the reticulated python, boa constrictor, De-Schauensee's anaconda, green anaconda and Beni anaconda.

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## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### Belgian unions call general strike for EU summit date

BRUSSELS (AFP) - Belgian trade unions yesterday called a general strike for January 30, the date of a summit of European Union leaders in the capital Brussels.

Terming the strike "inevitable" after tense negotiations with Socialist Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo's government, the unions said in a statement that the action was "patently required to convince the government and employers to take fully into account the social reality for workers and those on benefits."

Advance warning of strike action last week saw EU leaders toy with rescheduling their latest talks on the European economy and the debt crisis, with Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti saying it had been brought forward

by a day.

But EU president Herman Van Rompuy finally announced the original date of January 30, despite difficulties for Belgian authorities in guaranteeing normal service in Brussels and potential embarrassment for new premier Di Rupo.

Three union movements uniting behind the strike call said negotiations with the government on further likely spending cuts demanded by EU partners to stay within set deficit targets had proved "inconclusive".

Fearing new austerity measures on top of existing cuts amounting to more than 12 billion euros (\$15 billion) for 2012, they demanded fresh talks with the government.

### Mubarak defence challenges death penalty call



AFP photo shows ousted Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak being wheeled on a stretcher into the police academy during his murder trial in Cairo on January 9, 2012. Mubarak returned yesterday to court where his defence began a five-day challenge to calls for the ex-strongman who was ousted from power last February 11 to be executed for the deaths of hundreds of pro-democracy protesters.

## Anger at military crackdown after Nigerian fuel strike ends

LAGOS (AFP) - A military crackdown on protests in Nigeria drew harsh criticism yesterday after the country's unions ended a week-long strike over fuel costs following the president's decision to reduce petrol prices.

The governor of Lagos state, which includes Nigeria's economic capital, strongly criticised the deployment of troops who shot into the air and chased away protesters with armoured vehicles on Monday.

Local media also reported a statement said to be from Nobel literature prize winner Wole Soyinka, one of the country's most respected voices, that demanded "the immediate and unconditional removal of these soldiers."

## Syria rejects Arab troops, UN urged to step in

DAMASCUS (AFP) - Syria yesterday ruled out any deployment of Arab troops as proposed by Qatar to halt 10 months of deadly unrest, as army defectors appealed to the UN Security Council to intervene in the crisis.

"Syria rejects the statements of officials of Qatar on sending Arab troops to worsen the crisis... and pave the way for foreign intervention," the foreign ministry said.

"The Syrian people refuse any foreign intervention in any name. They will oppose any attempt to undermine the sovereignty of Syria and the integrity of its territory," it said in a statement.

In an interview with US television aired at the weekend, Qatar's emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, said he favoured sending Arab troops to Syria to "stop the killing."

The Arab League is due to meet on Syria on Saturday-Sunday and expected to dis-

He could not be reached to confirm the statement.

Yesterday, some 50 troops still occupied the main protest site in Lagos, but military checkpoints set up the previous day on major roads appeared to have been removed. Dozens of soldiers however kept watch at some of Lagos' flashpoints.

Nigerians rushed to petrol stations to refuel and traffic returned to roads.

Newspapers also slammed the deployments, which came as President Goodluck Jonathan appeared on television early Monday to announce a 30 percent decrease in the price of petrol.

"To some Lagosians, the sight of heavily armed soldiers on all of the city's biggest expressways could only mean

one thing: a coup," an analysis in Punch newspaper said.

"It wasn't a military coup. What Lagos experienced was a military occupation ordered by President Goodluck Jonathan."

The strike over fuel prices that had begun on January 9 had shut down Africa's most populous nation and largest oil producer while also bringing tens of thousands out into the streets in protest.

But early Monday, with the strike and protests set to press ahead for a sixth day after a weekend pause for both actions, armed soldiers occupied main protest sites in both Lagos and the capital Abuja.

A number of civil society and political groups have been organising the protests and several vowed to push ahead.

cuss the fate of its widely criticised observer mission in the violence-stricken country.

From its base in Turkey, the Syrian Free Army (SFA) called on the 22-member Arab League to "quickly transfer the case of Syria to the UN Security Council," in a statement

signed by its leader Riyadh al-Asaad, a dissident colonel.

The United Nations has pledged to assist the Arab mission deployed in Syria since last month, saying Monday it would start training the bloc's observers within days.



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## Australia experts call for energy drink warnings



This file photo shows cans of various energy drinks, displayed at a store in the US.

SYDNEY (AFP) - Researchers in Australia called for health warnings on caffeine-loaded energy drinks following a spike in the number of people reporting medical problems after drinking them.

Health professionals from the University of Sydney's Medical School and the New South Wales Poisons Information Centre said reports of ad-

verse reactions to drinks like Red Bull and V jumped from just 12 in 2004 to 65 in 2010.

Over the seven years to 2010, 297 calls for assistance were recorded with at least 128 people hospitalised with symptoms including heart palpitations, agitation and stomach upsets.

Of these, 20 people had

more serious issues, such as seizures and hallucinations.

The study, published in the Medical Journal of Australia on Monday, said the average person affected was 17 years old and that they often mixed energy drinks with alcohol.

"Our study demonstrates the extent of the growing problem in Australia with energy drink consumption and toxicity, particularly among adolescents," the study's authors wrote.

"Given the clear evidence of toxicity and the growing number of hospitalisations associated with consumption of energy drinks... health authorities should increase awareness of the problem, improve package labelling and regulate caffeine content."

They recommended that "labelling and any marketing of these products should include appropriate health warnings and the national poisons hotline number". A can of energy drink may contain up to 300 milligrams of caffeine -- compared to an average 65-120mg for a cup of drip coffee -- and Poisons Centre medical director Naren Gunja called for more thorough regulation.

"Things to look at would be... how much caffeine do these drinks contain, how many can you buy at once, what age should you be when you buy them, should there be an age limit to being sold the drinks," he said.

## Health & Living

### ACNE



Normal Acne

Cystic Acne

#### Definition

Acne is a skin condition that occurs when your hair follicles become plugged with oil and dead skin cells.

Depending on its severity, acne can cause emotional distress and lead to scarring of the skin.

#### Causes

Three factors contribute to the formation of acne:

- \*Overproduction of oil (sebum)

- \*Irregular shedding of dead skin cells resulting in irritation of the hair follicles of your skin

- \*Buildup of bacteria

#### Factors that may worsen acne

These factors can trigger or aggravate an existing case of acne:

- Hormones.** Androgens are hormones that increase in boys and girls during puberty and cause the sebaceous glands to enlarge and make more sebum. Hormonal changes related to pregnancy and the use of oral contraceptives can also affect sebum production.

- Certain medications.** Drugs containing corticosteroids, androgens or lithium are known to cause acne.

- Diet.** Studies indicate that certain dietary factors, including dairy products and carbohydrate-rich foods -- such as bread, bagels and chips, which increase blood sugar -- may trigger acne.

#### Acne myths

Contrary to what some people think, these factors have little effect on acne:

- Greasy foods and chocolate have proved to have little to no effect on the development or course of acne.

- Dirty skin. Acne isn't caused by dirt. In fact, scrubbing the skin too hard or cleansing with harsh soaps or chemicals irritates the skin and can make acne worse. Simple cleansing of the skin to remove excess oil and dead skin cells is all that's required.

#### Risk factors

##### Teenagers

Women and girls, two to seven days before their periods

##### Pregnant women

People using certain medications

#### Other risk factors include:

- \*Direct skin contact with greasy or oily substances, or to certain cosmetics applied directly to the skin

- \*A family history of acne -- if your parents had acne, you're likely to develop it, too

- \*Friction or pressure on your skin caused by various items, such as telephones or cellphones, helmets, tight collars and backpacks

- \*Stress doesn't cause acne, but if you have acne already, stress may make it worse

#### Lifestyle and home remedies

- \*Wash problem areas with a gentle cleanser.

- \*Try over-the-counter acne lotion to dry excess oil and promote peeling. Look for products containing benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid as the active ingredient.

- \*Avoid irritants.

- \*Watch what touches your face.

- \*Don't pick or squeeze blemishes.

Always talk with your doctor before trying a natural remedy. Dietary supplements can cause side effects and may alter the safety and effectiveness of certain medications.



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## Carbon dioxide affecting fish brains: study

(AFP) - Rising human carbon dioxide emissions may be affecting the brains and central nervous systems of sea fish, with serious consequences for their survival, according to research released.

Carbon dioxide concentrations predicted to occur in the ocean by the end of this century will interfere with fishes' ability to hear, smell, turn and evade predators, the research found.

The Australian Research Council's Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies said it had been testing the performance of baby coral fishes in sea water containing higher levels of dissolved CO<sub>2</sub> for several years.

"And it is now pretty clear that they sustain significant disruption to their central nervous system, which is likely to impair their chances of survival," said Phillip Munday, a professor who reported the findings.

In a paper published in the journal *Nature Climate Change*, Munday and his colleagues also detail what they say is world-first evidence that high CO<sub>2</sub> levels in sea water disrupts a key brain receptor in fish.

This causes marked changes in their behaviour and sensory abilities.

"We've found that elevated CO<sub>2</sub> in the oceans can directly interfere with fish neurotransmitter functions, which poses a direct and pre-

viously unknown threat to sea life," said Munday.

The team began by studying how baby clown and damselfishes performed alongside their predators in CO<sub>2</sub>-enriched water.

They found that while the predators were somewhat affected, the baby fish suffered much higher rates of attrition.

"Our early work showed that the sense of smell of baby fish was harmed by higher CO<sub>2</sub> in the water, meaning they found it harder to locate a reef to settle on or detect the warning smell of a predator fish," said Munday.

The team then examined whether fishes' sense of hearing -- used to locate and home in on reefs at night, and avoid them during the day -- was affected.

"The answer is, yes it was. They were confused and no longer avoided reef sounds during the day. Being attracted to reefs during daylight would make them easy meat for predators."

The research also showed that the fish also tended to lose their natural instinct to turn left or right -- an important factor in schooling behaviour.

Munday said around 2.3 billion tonnes of human CO<sub>2</sub> emissions dissolve into the world's oceans every year, causing changes in the chemical environment of the water in which fish and other species live.

## Sci-Tech

# Wikipedia Plans 24-Hour Blackout to Protest U.S. Piracy Law



NEW YORK - Wikipedia, the popular community-edited online encyclopedia, will black out its English-language site for 24 hours starting at midnight Eastern Time on Wednesday to seek support against proposed U.S. anti-piracy legislation that Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales said threatens the future of the Internet.

The service will be the highest profile name to join a growing campaign that will see it black out its page so that visitors will only see information about the controversial Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and the Protect Intellectual Property Act (PIPA).

The information will urge

Wikipedia readers to contact their local congressman to vote against the bills. Other smaller sites leading the campaign include Reddit.com and Cheezeburger.

The decision to black out the site was decided by voting within the Wikipedia community of writers and editors who manage the free service, Wales said. The English language Wikipedia receives more than 25 million average daily visitors from around the world, according to comScore data.

The bills pit technology companies like Google Inc and Facebook against the bill's supporters, including Hollywood studios and music labels, which say the legislation is

needed to protect intellectual property and jobs.

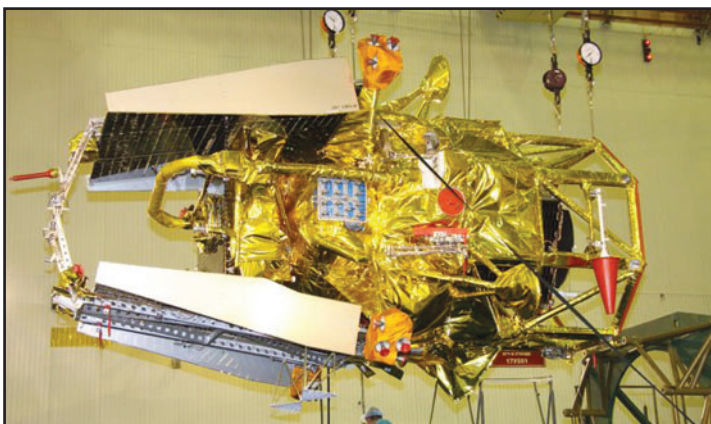
The SOPA legislation under consideration in the House of Representatives aims to crack down on online sales of pirated American movies, music or other goods by forcing Internet companies to block access to foreign sites offering material that violates U.S. copyright laws. Supporters argue the bill is unlikely to have an impact on U.S.-based websites.

U.S. advertising networks could also be required to stop online ads, and search engines would be barred from directly linking to websites found to be distributing pirated goods.

Google has repeatedly said the bill goes too far and could hurt investment. Along with other Internet companies such as Yahoo, Facebook, Twitter and eBay, it has run advertisements in major newspapers urging Washington lawmakers to rethink their approach.

White House officials raised concerns on Saturday about SOPA saying they believe it could make businesses on the Internet vulnerable to litigation and harm legal activity and free speech.

## US may be behind Mars probe failure: Russia



The Phobos-Grunt space probe being fitted to a delivery rocket.

(AFP) - Russia on Tuesday said the failure of its Phobos-Grunt probe for Mars could have been caused by radiation from US radars, in its latest allegation of Western interference in its space programme.

"There is such a theory," Yury Koptev the head of the scientific committee of state technology company Russian Technologies told the RIA-Novosti news agency.

"To test (the theory), an equipment block similar to the one on Phobos-Grunt will be exposed to radiation from the possible unintentional exposure to American radars," said Koptev, a former head of

Russian space agency Roscosmos.

Roscosmos is currently looking into the possible causes of its latest major space mishap, after the probe, which was launched in November, met an inglorious end Sunday when it crashed back into Earth over the Pacific Ocean.

Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin said Tuesday that most of the agency's failures were aftershocks following the industry's dark period of the 1990s, when poor funding could have led to production of faulty equipment.

"If we confirm the fact of a foreign influence on our space

equipment over the part of Earth we cannot see, we will come to different conclusions," he told Interfax in apparent reference to the West.

Roscosmos mentioned the possibility of foreign interference last week when the current agency chief Vladimir Popovkin openly asked why its failures often occurred when craft were over the western hemisphere.


"I do not want to blame anyone, but today there are some very powerful counter-measures that can be used against spacecraft whose use we cannot exclude," he told the *Izvestia* daily on January 10.

Phobos-Grunt was one of the more high-profile mishaps costing \$165 million and carrying also a Chinese satellite it was supposed to release in the Mars orbit.

It struck less than three months after an unmanned Progress supply ship bound for the International Space Station crashed into Siberia.

Russia also lost three navigation satellites as well as an advanced military satellite and a telecommunications satellite in the past year.

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## PICKLES



## MOMMA



## CALVIN and HOBBS



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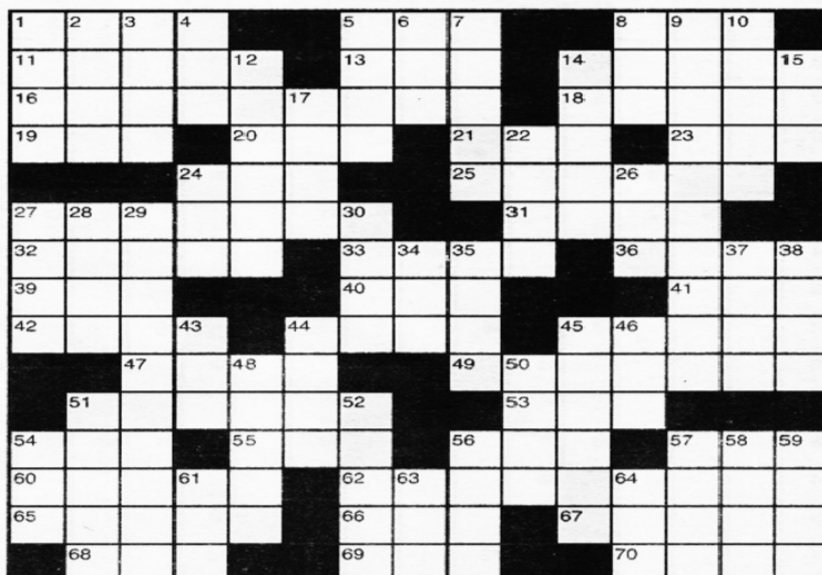
## GRIFTER'S GAME

## ACROSS

1. First name in spydom
5. Chicken — pie
8. Outback bird
11. Geriatrics concern
13. Uproar
14. Dalmatian markings
16. Mexican War battle site
18. Desires
19. Turkish official
20. Fishing apparatus
21. Between zeta and theta
23. Caddie's item
24. "— You Experienced" (Hendrix)
25. Furnace valve
27. Forces
31. Ukrainian center of trade
32. African succulents
33. Tranquil rest
36. Precious stones
39. Coop up
40. Speed rate: abbr.
41. GOP mem.
42. Transport
44. Extreme
45. First-grader doing math
47. Clinton's canal
49. Investment payoff
51. In a balanced manner
53. Caesar salad ingredient
54. Whiffenpoof
55. Make a bow
56. — Friday
57. Crow's call
60. Elude
62. Cortés's victim

## DOWN

65. Head start
66. Age
67. Pillar style
68. Daughter of Hyperion
69. Unfamiliar
70. Data for a gambler
1. "Your — Don't Dance" (Loggins and Messina)
2. Excited
3. "Private Dancer" Turner
4. Tiny toiler
5. Leave
6. Schiller's "— to Joy"
7. Trifled (with)
8. Clean air gp.
9. He's remembered for his madrigals
10. Vocalize
12. Artistic styles
14. Hindu wise man
15. Ship's heading
17. Walk unsteadily
22. Steal
24. "The Naked —"
26. Mrs. Al Bundy
27. Milit. rank
28. Toast topping
29. South American capital
30. 18-wheeler
34. Busy mo. for a CPA
35. Former home of the Mets
37. Assemble for action
38. Chipper
43. Poet's "prior"
44. Reuben source
45. Fished
46. Used a shovel
48. Between: prefix
50. Like Felix Unger's room
51. Get a running start on matrimony
52. Aden's country
54. Flanders and Begley
56. Chew on, as a bone
57. Cheese ingredient
58. In the thick of
59. WWII female soldiers
61. Petrol
63. Sourdough's quest
64. Confused place, informally

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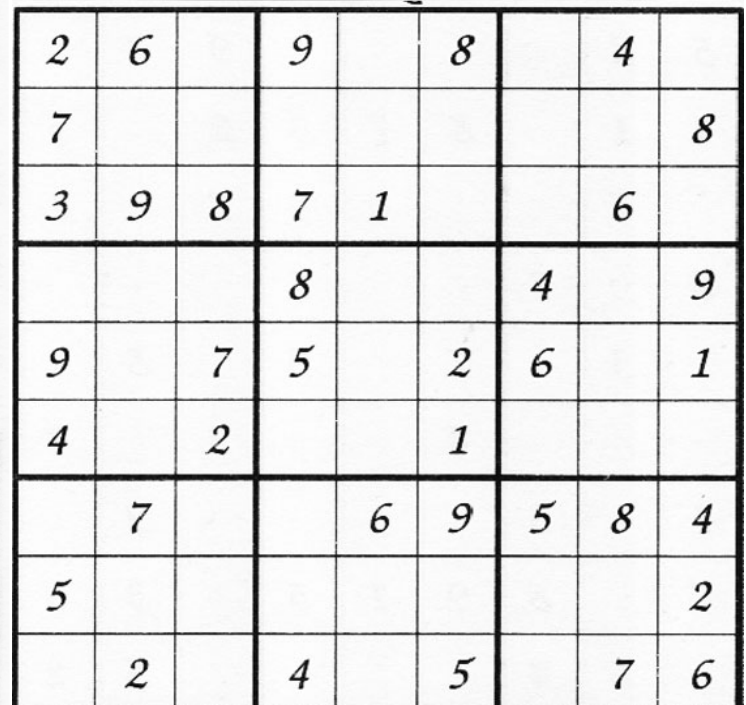
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## Sudoku



## SOLUTION

9	L	I	S	E	T	6	Z	8
Z	6	E	L	8	I	9	T	5
T	8	5	6	9	Z	E	L	I
L	5	8	I	6	9	Z	E	T
I	E	9	Z	T	5	L	8	6
6	Z	T	E	L	8	5	I	9
5	9	Z	T	I	L	8	6	E
8	I	6	9	Z	E	T	5	L
E	T	L	8	5	6	I	9	Z

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9. A number is Never repeated in a row or column. In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9.



## Finance



**AHMEDABAD--** Vijay Nakra (L), Vice President, Sales - Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd. poses with a Mahindra's Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) 'XUV 500' during the launch at Courtyard by Marriott in Ahmedabad on January 17, 2012.

A US \$14.4 billion multinational group based in Mumbai, India, Mahindra employs more than 144,000 people in over 100 countries. (AFP PHOTO)

## Investors snap up eurozone debt despite downgrades

MADRID (AFP) - Cash-flush investors snapped up eurozone debt yesterday despite a slew of sovereign downgrades, pouring money into the region's bailout fund as well as into Spanish and Greek paper.

Buyers lined up for the debt auctions, showing a new appetite for risk since the European Central Bank loaned nearly half a trillion euros at a rock-bottom rate to the region's banks last month.

Standard & Poor's downgrades of nine European nations' sovereign ratings on Friday including Spain's, and its decision to remove the eurozone bailout fund's AAA rating on Monday, failed to dissuade investors.

"It was expected because it is all to do with the ECB's three-year long-term refinancing operation," said Edward Hugh, an independent economist based in Barcelona.

The three-year loans from the Frankfurt-based central bank, carrying a one-percent interest rate, allowed the banks to buy up sovereign bonds and pocket the higher returns, he said.

They also enabled the banks to refinance their own borrowing.

But the ECB operation was not likely to free up credit in the system, Hugh said, because the banks were using the money to avoid writing off existing bad loans instead of lending to new businesses.

"That's what is freezing the whole thing up," he said.

European stock markets closed higher with London's FTSE index up 0.65 percent at 5,693.95 points, Paris' CAC-40 index up 1.40 percent at 3,269.99 points and Frankfurt's DAX 30 up 1.82 percent at 6,332.93 points.

The euro jumped to \$1.2762 in afternoon London deals from \$1.2667 late in New York on Monday.

With plenty of ECB money in the banks' pockets, the debt auctions passed off smoothly.

Demand outstripped supply by more than three to one in first-ever auction of six-month debt by the European Financial Stability Facility, the backstop for eurozone sovereigns in case of collapse.

Germany's Bundesbank,

which organised the auction, said it received 4.6 billion euros' (\$5.9 billion) worth of bids for 1.5 billion euros of six-month bonds, at an average yield of 0.2664 percent.

On Monday, the Standard and Poor's ratings agency downgraded the EFSF by one notch to AA+ but said it would restore its top AAA ranking if the fund obtains additional guarantees.

European Union president Herman Van Rompuy said in Madrid that the downgrade would have no impact on the fund's capacity to act, and noted that neither Moody's Investors Service nor Fitch Rating had cut the rating.

Spain's borrowing costs plummeted in an auction of 12- and 16-month paper, allowing it to raise 4.88 billion euros with demand outstripping supply by more than three times.

## Kraft Foods to axe 1,600 jobs

NEW YORK (AFP) - US giant Kraft Foods said yesterday it would slash 1,600 jobs in North America this year ahead of a move to split its businesses into two separate entities.

"When we announced our decision to create two world-class companies last August, we said both would be leaner, more competitive organizations," said Irene Rosenfeld, Kraft chairman and chief executive, in a statement.

The job cuts will touch operations in the United States and Canada, a big chunk of them in sales and corporate operations. Twenty percent of the positions are currently vacant anyway, Kraft said.

The cuts do not include manufacturing facilities, the company said, while suggesting that sector could be affected later.

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## Airbus stays ahead of Boeing with record 2011 orders



**HAMBURG - -** AFP photo shows an Airbus A380 of the Arab airline Emirates standing on the tarmac, seen through a window with the logo of aircraft manufacturer Airbus, in Hamburg, northern Germany, where Airbus held its new year's press conference yesterday. Airbus said it outgunned American rival Boeing in 2011, winning a dominant two-thirds market share with a record number of aircraft orders and expected clear skies ahead.

## Standard and Poor's starts to downgrade EU utilities

PARIS (AFP) - Four days after cutting nine European states' credit ratings, Standard and Poor's began to downgrade their public utilities yesterday, piling further pressure on the debt-ridden eurozone.

In France, which on Friday lost its AAA top rating, the agency downgraded energy giant EDF and electric grid manager RTE from AA- to A+ and national rail operator SNCF from AA+ to AA.

Paris airport operator ADP was warned it had been put on "negative outlook", which means that S&P will review its status and expects to downgrade it.

The Irish gas firm Bord Gais Eireann was put on negative outlook, as was Dublin airport and the Electricity Supply Board (ESB).

Finland's electricity system operator Fingrid Oyj was placed on negative outlook, as were Netherlands gas firms EBN, GasTerra and Nederlandse Gasunie and the Dutch rail company NS Groep.

From outside the eurozone, Northern Ireland Electricity Ltd. was also placed on negative outlook, as it is a sub-

sidary of the Irish supplier ESB.

European powerhouse Germany was the only eurozone country to be neither downgraded nor put on negative outlook, and its rail operator Deutsche Bahn was removed from negative outlook and given a stable AA rating.

S&P placed the various state-owned or government-linked companies on warning last month that it was examining their creditworthiness, and took the decision to downgrade or lower outlooks after the parent states were downgraded.

## YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

G	O	O	S	E	D	D	A	S	M	A	L	I
A	B	E	T	R	E	U	S	E	E	V	E	N
L	I	F	E	I	S	L	I	K	E	L	O	V
R	A	C	E	A	S	H	O	W	E	R		
A	B	O	D	E	U	S	N	I	N	S	E	T
R	O	S	R	E	L	A	T	E	D			
R	O	T	I	P	A	N	L	E	A	G	U	E
O	N	E	W	R	O	N	G	T	U	R	N	A
Z	E	R	O	E	D	R	O	D	E	L	B	E
						P	E	T	I	T	E	S
C	H	A	S	E	W	A	S	T	I	E	R	S
Y	O	U	L	L	B	E			S	O	N	S
N	U	D	O	I	N	H	O	T	W	A	T	E
D	R	I	P	E	T	U	D	E		N	O	T
I	S	E	E		L	Y	R	E	S	E	N	D

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Current as of: 01/17/2012	Currency Code	Buying rate banknotes	Buying Cheques	Selling Rate
U.S.A.	USD	1.77	1.78	1.80
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Canada	CAD	1.74	1.76	1.78
Britain	GBP	2.68	2.73	2.79
Switzerland	CHF	188.24	188.96	189.76
Netherlands	EUR	225.74	227.80	230.09
Sweden	SEK	24.79	25.51	26.31
Denmark	DKK	29.67	30.39	31.19
Norway	NOK	28.75	29.47	30.27
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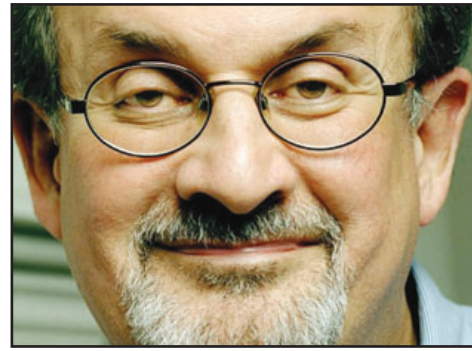
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## Rushdie in doubt for India festival after threats



**A picture shows Indian-born author Sir Salman Rushdie.**

NEW DELHI (AFP) - British author Salman Rushdie's planned appearance at a literary festival in India was thrown into doubt on Tuesday due to security concerns caused by protests from influential Muslim clerics.

Rushdie was due to speak at the five-day event that starts on Friday in the city of Jaipur in the state of Rajasthan, but his name has been dropped from the programme of events.

Festival organisers, who declined to be named, said that Rushdie's advertised appearances had been removed from the programme for security reasons, but that he was still expected to attend.

"He will not be in India on (Friday) January 20 due to a change of schedule. The festival stands by its invitation," festival producer Sanjoy Roy told AFP, without giving further details.

Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot told the NDTV news channel on Tuesday that "Salman Rushdie's presence does have security implications and we are keeping a close watch and have been in touch with the organisers."

"At the same time we can't prevent him from coming since he is a PIO (Person of Indian Origin)," Gehlot added, referring to Mumbai-born Rushdie's status as a permanent visa holder.

Last week, the Darululoom Deoband seminary in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh demanded the govern-

ment stop Rushdie from entering the country because of his allegedly blasphemous writing about Islam.

The novelist spent a decade in hiding after Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a fatwa in 1989 calling for his death for passages in his novel "The Sa-

tanic Verses", which was banned in India.

"His books have hurt and insulted Muslims and Islam -- how can he be a guest of this country?" Mufti Abul Qasim Nomani, the seminary vice chancellor, told AFP.

"We are not going to say anything about our plans if Rushdie comes to India. We are still in talks with the government and we are hopeful it will ban him."

The seminary, which is one of the world's most important Islamic universities, is known for its conservative teachings that are thought to have shaped the views of radical Islamist groups such as the Taliban.

Clerics from the seminary have denied trying to whip up religious tension ahead of state elections starting next month in Uttar Pradesh, where nearly 20 percent of voters are Muslims.

Free speech activists condemned attempts to prevent Rushdie from appearing at the festival.

The Jaipur Literature Festival, which does not charge for entry, attracts tens of thousands of Indian and overseas book fans every year with crowds able to mix with famous authors in the grounds of an old palace.

Rushdie, who won the Booker Prize for his 1981 novel "Midnight's Children", previously attended the event in 2007 without attracting protests.



### January - Wk 3

**Friday Jan. 20:** \* Jump Up - Oranjestad - 7:30 p.m.

**Saturday Jan. 21:** \* Children & Youth Calypso & Roadmarch Contest - Joe Laveist - 7 p.m.

**Sunday Jan. 22** - \* Balloon Parade - San Nicolas - 1 p.m.

\* Inscription Calypso & Roadmarch Contest - Bonaire Club - 5 p.m.



## Gold Coast Aruba: Great savings for large families on holiday rentals



Aruba's newest and most innovative gated community has enjoyed steady sales since breaking ground, as many are finding the secure surroundings and outstanding amenities are just what they were looking for before considering purchasing property on the island. Some owners are using the villas or town homes as vacation retreats rather than full time and are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their 'home away from home' in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," noted Gold Coast developer Fito Croes. To assist in the demand for more complete facilities for groups and families, famed hotelier Ed Malone has been placed in charge of the rental program.

Staying at Gold Coast is a very attractive proposition for those traveling with groups that would require multiple hotel rooms. Two and three bedroom Villas or Town Homes accommodate large numbers and offer extensive amenities along with a final cost resulting in considerable savings. The community is minutes to the best beaches and all the casino action, and offers a quiet and secluded getaway with two swimming pools and specialized services with more on the way, such as a fitness room, tennis courts and mini-mall. Ed can arrange maid service, babysitters, caterers, airline

pick-up and drop-off; they even boast a shopping service to stock your shelves before arrival.

Gold Coast accommodations are elegant and spacious, offering privacy for

high-speed fiber-optic Internet connection, individual washer/dryer, and are fully air-conditioned. Cribs, high chairs and hair dryers are available for a modest fee. Concierge services to arrange



parents or a few couples. Beautifully appointed kitchens and bathrooms grace each abode; barbecues and lounges are provided for friendly cookouts and truly savoring the island life. All homes come with cable TV,

rental cars, spa appointments, activities and restaurant reservations are all part of the package.

Check-in for your holiday escape is conducted in the comfort of your vacation home, not while waiting on line at check-in desk. In every way, Gold Coast seeks to pamper their guests while providing them with the feeling of being in a cozy community, not the normally bustling resort, particularly experienced during the major holidays. If you wish an optimal vacation experience with great savings, visit their website: [www.goldcoast-aruba.com](http://www.goldcoast-aruba.com) to get acquainted with the community and the layout, details and availability of accommodations, or call 586-2200 to talk personally to a Gold Coast representative.



## Steak on a Stone-Le Petit Café's specialty



In a time when dining choices and critiques are based on value for your dollar, an old favorite, Le Petit Café, still offers one of the best values not only in price, but quality, quantity and ambiance.

Le Petit Café in Palm Beach offers charming surroundings reminiscent of a European outdoor café. Surrounded by Old World gaslights and an abundance of flora, it provides a delightful and romantic setting. In Oranjestad, diners can enjoy a breathtaking view of the harbor; particularly as the sun dips over the horizon and the lights of town set the waters aglow. Taking advantage of their Early Bird Special not only offers a great price for a delicious meal, but put you in the right place at the right time to enjoy Aruba's most spectacular daily performance; our stunning sunsets.

The Early Bird special offers a choice of a full sized chicken breast, a hefty portion of filet mignon or fresh grouper fillet accompanied by a well-stuffed baked potato, rice or french fries. There is a choice of soup or salad as a starter, and ice cream for dessert, all for a modest \$21.50; an unbeatable price for a great meal on Aruba!

Cooking your main course on the stone is a supremely healthy method of preparation, seasoned to perfection and using no fats or oils. Fish

in particular is excellent; extremely moist and tasty. A thick cut of filet mignon usually requires cutting into smaller sections to cook fully, especially if your preference is medium-well to well done.

Le Petit Café is particularly well known for its "Land and Sea" specialty, filet mignon and lobster tail; a gourmet treat when served in their signature fashion. The restaurant also offers a diverse menu of pastas and tempting gourmet appetizers such as seafood crepes, crispy calamari, and escargot. For family members in the mood for something different there are several dishes to choose from, such as chicken parmesan, so a large family with different ideas of what they want for dinner can easily be accommodated.

We all know that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and Le Petit Café has also long been famous for the best value for breakfast on Aruba. They still offer an American breakfast for \$6.95 and a full breakfast buffet for \$10.95, another unbeatable value!

Le Petit Café is also located in the Paradise Beach Villas, so whether you are staying in Oranjestad, Palm Beach or Eagle Beach, a La Petit Café restaurant can be found only a short stroll away from you resort, a perfect way to begin or end your day!





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## SPORTS

### Tennis: Djokovic urges talks 'behind closed doors'

MELBOURNE (AFP) - Novak Djokovic Tuesday called for talks to improve conditions in tennis to be kept "behind closed doors" after a public disagreement between Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer at the Australian Open.

Players Saturday met new men's tour chief Brad Drewett in Melbourne on the eve of the event and are reportedly unhappy over Davis Cup scheduling and their share of prize money at grand slams, among other issues.

After the players' meeting Rafael Nadal accused Roger Federer of not doing enough to back fellow professionals, exposing a rift between the two long-time rivals on how to improve conditions.

"It's obvious that there are a lot of players in men's tennis that are, you know, complaining about the schedule and season," said Djokovic, after cruising through his first round match in Melbourne against Paolo Lorenzi.

"They don't even need to say much. But just looking at the injuries that we have, espe-

cially from the top players, including myself... it's obvious that we need some change.

"But I prefer talking in detail about these things more behind closed doors."

Federer Monday said he had no hard feelings towards world number two Nadal, who admitted that he regretted making his comments in public.

And Andy Roddick said the two had been "the model of a respectful rivalry" and "the last thing I worry about is Roger and Rafa getting along".

But the former world number one said there was a strong mood for change among players after the "passionate" pre-tournament meeting.

"I don't think it was an angry meeting. I feel like it was an opportunity to maybe articulate our issues," he said. "There's not a lot of times when you can get 140 guys in the same room in an open

forum. I think it was constructive."

Roddick added that the men's tennis circuit needed "fundamental" change to give more power to the players.

He said: "I don't think it's smart for us to ask for permission to have less events. That seems ridiculous if you're looking at tennis as a business."

"Russia's Alex Bogomolov Jr, who earlier tweeted strong support for a players' strike, also said it was inspiring to see players united -- but he was more cagey on calls for a walk-out on Tuesday.

"Everybody is on the same page and everybody wants to grow the game and make it better. We'll see what happens," Bogomolov Jr said.

"The way everybody is sticking by each other, the way everybody is on the same page, is inspiring," he added.

### Tennis: Williams barges through in late-night win

MELBOURNE (AFP) - Five-time champion Serena Williams moved into the second round of the Australian Open in the early hours of Wednesday morning with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Austria's Tamira Paszek.

In a match that didn't start until 11:30 pm on Tuesday, following Lleyton Hewitt's four-hour win over German Cedrik-Marcel Stebe, the 12th-seeded Williams overcame a tenacious Paszek in one hour and 20 minutes.

The 13-time grand slam winner has now won 15 consecutive matches at Melbourne Park following her title wins in 2009 and 2010.

She missed the 2011 Open with injury and appeared in doubt for this year's tournament after injuring her ankle in Brisbane two weeks ago.

Williams moved well throughout the match and did

not appear hampered by the injury. But the late hour seemed to affect the 30-year-old American, who struggled to subdue the challenge from the unheralded Paszek.

"I think I was a wee bit tight out there today. I always get a little nervous in my first round matches," she said.

Williams, who has never lost in the first round in her 46 grand slams, appeared frustrated at times as she alternated between making scintillating winners and simple errors.

While smashing 34 winners past the Austrian, she also made 26 unforced errors to keep Paszek in touch.

But although Paszek fought hard throughout, the power of Williams proved decisive and the American finished strongly to move into a second round clash against Czech Barbora Zahlavova Strycova.

### Football: Hearts charged over non-payment of players

GLASGOW (AFP) - Hearts were officially charged by the Scottish Premier League on Tuesday after failing to pay their players on time for the fourth month in a row, the SPL announced following a board meeting.

The club faces a charge of "failing to behave with the utmost good faith" for failing to meet a midnight deadline for payment of January salaries.

Following the board meeting the SPL's board of directors issued a statement.

"The Scottish Premier League Board met this evening to consider the alleged failure by Heart of Midlothian FC to comply with the terms of the order made by the SPL on January 4, 2012 that the club pay the January wages due to the relevant players on the due date of January 16, 2012.

"As a result, Heart of Midlothian FC are being charged under SPL Rule A3.1 with failing to behave with the utmost good faith to the SPL.

"A hearing date will be notified to the club in due course."

Under SPL rules, Hearts could now be hit with a fine, be docked points or be hit with a transfer embargo.

Hearts had earlier on Tuesday hit back saying they had paid the wages.

"The club totally refutes the suggestion made in today's statement from the SPL that it failed to comply with this order," Hearts said on the club's website.

"The club has made payment of the remuneration to each of the players on January 16, 2012 and has documentary evidence to this effect."

### Football: Maradona 'fine' after kidney stone treatment

SHANGHAI (AFP) - Argentine football legend Diego Maradona reassured his fans he was feeling fine Tuesday after undergoing treatment for kidney stones.

The 51-year-old said he will be fit to supervise Thursday's training session with his Dubai club Al-Wasl in preparation for their match against Sharjah on January 23.

"Yesterday I was in a hospital bed for an operation for kidney stones, but I had to be here in China," he said during a charity event for Swiss luxury watchmaker Hublot in Shanghai.

Maradona began feeling pain after a match on Saturday and was later admitted to hospital in Dubai.

He said he still had stomach pain and a slight fever but added: "I say to all those who love me, I'm fine, I'm doing fine as coach in Dubai."

The 1986 World Cup-winner signed a contract with Al-Wasl in June, 11 months after he was dismissed as the manager of Argentina's national team.

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# FIFA urges Brazil Congress to quickly pass World Cup bill



Handout picture released by Brazil's Ministry of Sports of FIFA secretary general Jerome Valcke giving a press conference after a meeting about the issues concerning the preparations for the Brazil 2014 FIFA World Cup.

BRASILIA (AFP) - Visiting FIFA's general secretary Jerome Valcke called here for quick legislative approval of a bill on Brazil's hosting of the 2014 soccer World Cup.

"There is a time you have to give birth to this law," Valcke told reporters. "We are so closer to give birth to this law, the nine months are over, we are ready to bring it out."

The bill gives FIFA exclusive rights to pictures, sound and other forms of expression linked to the World Cup and slaps penal and financial sanctions for any illegal reproduc-

tion.

Valcke was accompanied by the country's sports Minister Aldo Rebelo and by Brazilian football icon Ronaldo, who last year accepted an invitation to become head of the 2014 World Cup organizing committee.

"We also have a strong commitment from the Congress to vote on the 2014 bill in the first part of March," said Rebelo, who acknowledged that a few points remained to be solved.

"But it will be done," he pledged. "I want to reassure everybody of the willingness and commitment of President (Dilma Rousseff) and the government of Brazil to make every effort to make the 2014 FIFA World Cup a success."

FIFA, keen to prevent sales of tickets on the black market, has agreed to lower prices of admission tickets for students and seniors in line with the World Cup Law.

Discount tickets represent 10 percent of total tickets for the World Cup in a country where the minimum wage is \$332 per month.

This week, Valcke is to visit soccer stadiums in the northeastern cities of Fortaleza and Salvador de Bahia -- two of the 12 Brazilian cities that

will stage World Cup games.

Brazilian authorities are racing to build or renovate the 12 stadiums in time for one of the world's premier sporting events.

On Thursday, Valcke is to meet the local World Cup organizing committee in Rio.

During his Brazilian tour, he was also to confer with members of the government and lawmakers, including former World Cup winner Romario who last week said Brazil will not be "100 percent ready" for the World Cup.

"I think that (Brazil) won't be 100 percent ready. Of the 12 stadiums (that are to stage World Cup events) maybe 10 will be ready," the retired football star said in his interview with the magazine Istoe.

"As to work on public transportation, none of the cities involved will be able to complete it fully," said Romario, who is now a lawmaker with Brazil's Socialist Party (PSB).

He also warned that the total cost for staging the World Cup could jump from an estimated \$44 billion to \$55.5 billion.

Valcke said he planned to return to Brazil in March to assess progress in World Cup preparations.

## Djokovic dazzles in... continued from page 16



Novak Djokovic of Serbia hits a return against Paolo Lorenzi of Italy in their first round

Meanwhile, second seed Kvitolova and Sharapova, the world number four, made convincing starts at sun-drenched Melbourne Park.

As temperatures again climbed past 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit), Kvitolova raced past Russia's Vera Dushevina 6-2, 6-0 and

Sharapova pummelled Argentina's Gisela Dulko 6-0, 6-1 in less than an hour.

"I knew I had a tough opponent today," a delighted Sharapova said afterwards. "I focused on every point and took her time away -- she's a player who loves time on the ball."

Estonia's Kaia Kanepi, who won the Brisbane tournament, beat Sweden's Johanna Larsson 6-2, 6-4 to reach the second round.

Japan's Kei Nishikori came through in three sets against Stephane Robert of France and bullet-serving Canadian Milos Raonic, a winner this month in Chennai, eclipsed Italy's Filippo Volandri for the loss of just six games.

Spanish fifth seed David Ferrer beat Portugal's Rui Machado in straight sets, and Serbia's Viktor Troicki came through in five against former French Open champion Juan-Carlos Ferrero.

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## NBA: Fisher continues... continued from page 16

Odom drained a three pointer with just four seconds left in the first to give the Mavericks an 18-15 lead heading into the second quarter.

The Lakers shot 41 percent and Bynum had 10 points as the Lakers led 39-35 at the half.

But Los Angeles struggled mightily in the third quarter scoring just two points in one eight-minute stretch and shooting just three-of-19 from the field.

"We were a little disjointed offensively," said

Lakers coach Mike Brown.

Bryant missed a jump shot in the closing minute before Dallas' Jason Terry hit a one-handed pullup from six feet with 10 seconds left to tie the game 70-70.

The Lakers then ran the clock down to the final seconds, setting the stage for Fisher's game-winning shot from beyond the arc.

The win give the Lakers nine consecutive wins at home and six victories in their last seven games.

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## Tennis: Djokovic dazzles in triple slam quest

MELBOURNE (AFP) - Novak Djokovic made a dazzling start to his Australian Open defence Tuesday but his close rival Andy Murray was slower off the blocks and home hope Samantha Stosur became the first big name to fall.

World number one Djokovic powered past Italian Paolo Lorenzi 6-2, 6-0, 6-0, in a comprehensive victory in which he even won a point with an audacious trick shot between his legs.

By contrast Murray, runner-up to the Serb last year, was embarrassed by a near-identical party-piece from Ryan Harrison before subduing the American 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-2.

Injury-plagued Australian veteran Lleyton Hewitt ground out a trademark late-night, four-hour marathon 7-5, 6-4, 3-6, 7-5 win against 83rd-ranked German Cedrik-Marcel Stebe to set up a second-round match with Andy Roddick.

Five-time women's champion Serena Williams dispatched Austria's Tamira Paszek in straight sets 6-3, 6-2 but was not off the court until nearly 1:00 am, as the match only began at 11:30 pm following Hewitt's win.

But Australia's US Open champion Stosur became a major casualty as she froze in front of her home fans, allowing Romania's Sorana Cirstea to record a famous straight-sets victory.

Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova and glamorous Russian Maria Sharapova, the 2008 Open winner, both started strongly and 2008 runner-up Jo-Wilfried Tsonga went through alongside fellow French seeds Gael Monfils and Richard Gasquet.

However, Djokovic looked the pick of the men's players as the Wimbledon and US Open champion launched his

pursuit of a third straight grand slam title in style, exemplified by his crowd-pleasing trick shot.

Leading 3-0 in the third and standing on the baseline, Djokovic turned his back to the court and clipped a shot between his legs to the flummoxed Lorenzi, who embarrassingly netted.

It was a sign of overflowing self-belief in the Serb, who won 10 of 11 finals and went 70-6 last year -- despite being derailed by injuries after the US Open -- in a season described by some as the best in tennis history.

"I just have more confidence that I'm playing on right now. I just believe that I can win, especially against the biggest rivals in the major events," Djokovic said.

Later Murray, seeking Britain's first male grand slam title since 1936, became the first top-four man to concede a set before gaining the measure of Harrison -- apart from the American's trick shot while trailing in the fourth.

"Today was a bit of a shock to the system," said Murray, referring to the hot afternoon weather. "It was good to get used to playing in that heat again because I might have to a bit further down the line."

Stosur, who has only won one match in three tournaments this year, all in Australia, put in an error-strewn performance as she became the latest women's grand slam champion to fail in her very next major.

"There's not any other word for it but a total disappointment," she said.

"It's not through lack of trying or not wanting it or anything like that. I mean, you can't pick the times that you want to play well," Stosur added.

*continues on page 15*

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## NBA: Fisher continues Mr Clutch role for Lakers

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Derek Fisher hit a clutch three-pointer with just 3.1 seconds left as the Los Angeles Lakers rallied in the fourth quarter to beat the Dallas Mavericks 73-70 on Monday.

It was the first three pointer of the game for the Lakers who spoiled the return of Lamar Odom to Staples Center arena.

"I am never the first option, but my teammates trust me," said Fisher, who has made a career of making seemingly impossible game-winning shots for the Lakers over his 15-years in the NBA.

"This is what I do. Regardless of how many shots I get throughout the game with my wisdom and my experience I have to trust my offence."

The Lakers had missed all 10 three-point attempts prior to Fisher draining his game-winning dagger.

Los Angeles star Kobe Bryant struggled from the field and finished with just 14 points, snapping his streak of 40 points or more at four games.

Andrew Bynum led the Lakers with 17 points and 15 rebounds. But it was Fisher's dramatic final basket that lifted the Lakers to the win as they gained a small measure of revenge over Dallas which swept Los Angeles out the playoffs.

The two teams met in last year's NBA quarter-finals with the Mavericks winning in four straight, eliminating the Lakers from the post-season and sending their iconic coach Phil Jackson into retirement.

Odom was playing in his first game at Staples Center arena since being traded by the Los Angeles to the Mavericks before the start of the season.

Odom received a standing ovation from the pro-Lakers crowd when he came into the game off the Mavericks' bench in the first quarter. Lakers guard Fisher was one of the first to greet him walking over to shake his hand as the crowd stood and applauded.

"I talked with him about just competing as hard as he could and letting everything else take care of itself," Dallas coach Rick Carlisle said.

Odom finished with 10 points on four-of-12 shooting from the field. Germany's Dirk Nowitzki led the Mavericks with a game-high 21 points.

The game started slowly for the star players of both teams. Reigning NBA finals MVP Nowitzki shot zero-for-five in the first quarter and Kobe Bryant went zero-for-four.

*continues on page 15*

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